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OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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THE HARMONY OF JUSTICE AND LOVE.

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."—1 Tim. i., 5.

The object that the apostle had in uttering these words is shown in the verse preceding:

"Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies which minister questions [that is discussions], rather than godly edifying which is in faith."

He is giving an exhortation to Timothy. He is instructing him how he shall carry himself, and how he shall teach others to carry themselves. His exhortation is this, substantially: "The little, petty questions that spring up among the Jews and among the Jewish Christians, about descent, and about ordinances, and about days, and about observances, and about genealogies—there is no end to them. They only make men dispute one with another; and you never can settle them in the world. They do not make men better. They do not improve their temper; they almost always make them more irritable. They do not make them more lovely; they almost always make them more unlovely. They do not instruct them: they almost always blind them. They make them think that they know, when they do not know. They do not minister to edification." Thus he speaks of those questions which they were so likely to discuss.

Then he declares what the great end and object of preaching is. The end of the commandment—that is, the foundation on which we and everybody must stand; the foundation of all public and private instruction; the thing which the commandment undertakes to bring about in this world; the result which it is to produce—this, the apostle says, is *charity*, by which we mean love—the largest kind of love—love formed "out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." This is the object of all teaching, of all organization, of all religious institutions.

Now, any system of theology that, being legitimately preached, does not produce "charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned," is false, no matter what the materi-

Sunday Morning, Feb. 5, 1871. Lesson: 1 Thess. IV. Hymns (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 248, 771, 1333.

als are that are put into it. And every church organization that does not produce "charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned," is not a Christian organization. And any administration of the truth, in the hands of any church or sect, no matter whether it was apostolic or not, no matter if Paul, and Peter, and a dozen like them, living to be as old as Methuseleh, had come down to that church or sect, and to that administration, if it did not produce in its members "charity out of a pure and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned," would not be a Christian administration. For the end of the commandment is that. That is the thing to be produced by the administration of truth, and by organization, and by preaching. That is the thing which every man is to aim at. That is to be the fruit by which we shall know that men are Christians.

This exposition is remarkable. There are many things in it which I shall not trouble you with to-day—for I shall resume it. But the exposition of the text itself is full of philosophy.

Following Christ's declaration that *on love hung all the Old Testament dispensation*, Paul says, yet more comprehensively, that the whole end and aim of the command—that is, the old dispensation and the new one—is Love. He declares that on that they center. He says that this is the one great supreme end. But that which is peculiar here, is this: that he unfolds that love as complex, either in its nature, or else in its mode of developing the mind. It is not a mere complacency. It is not good-nature and general kindness without any other moral consideration. True Christianity—that which the term *Christianity* means in its highest inspiration—when it speaks of divine love, requires that it shall not be an affection proceeding out of moral indifference, or out of a low, flabby state of half-animal, half-spiritual kindness; but that it shall be a love "out of a pure heart." It is that benevolence which springs from a nature in which the highest moral sentiment predominates. No man is capable of issuing divine love, who is living under the control of his animal appetites—of his pride and selfishness. For the love that the Bible means, and that the apostle here expounds, is that love which is capable of being generated and issued out of pure thoughts; out of the highest spiritual sentiments; out of the noblest moral instincts. It is the fruit and voice and spirit of the highest part of a man's nature, and not of the lower parts of his nature. It is therefore a love that belongs first to God, and next to us by so much as we are divine, or are able to approach in sympathy to the divine elements.

But this is not all. It is a love which must have other attributes;

or rather, it is a love which must carry with it those elements which we erect into attributes as if they were separate from it, and different from it. It is a love which carries with it, as a part of itself, "a good conscience."

Now, *conscience* is but the generic term for *moral sense.* It is the fountain of truth; and so it carries the intellect with it. It is the fountain of rectitude; and so it carries righteousness with it. It is the fountain of honor; and so it carries all that glow and sensibility which surrounds the highest experience of rectitude. A true Christian love is one which must spring out of the highest moral sentiment, and which must also carry with it "a good conscience." "A good conscience" is a part of it. "A good conscience" ribs it up, and gives it backbone, and makes it clear to the core, solid, strong, efficacious. Love without any conscience is namby-pamby. It is mush. True love has in it the noblest sense of character "out of a pure heart." True love has in it an all-embracing sense of truth—the beauty of it, and the reality of it. True love is made up of elements which render it necessary that it shall have a discriminating regard for that which is right. It carries beauty and philosophy and moral excellence in it. It is a comprehensive affection of the soul.

Even all that does not exhaust the wonder of this divine experience of true charity, or love; for its full scope and quality can not be known until we see it with its own atmosphere about it. If it be simply an affection of time and change, limiting itself by the transient elements of this world, then it can in no respect resemble that affection of love which God experiences. Therefore it must have elevation above all physical conditions. A true, divine and Christian love must take hold on the invisible, on the future, on the infinite, on the eternal. And that is the scope of the term "faith" here used as the last-named source of that "charity" which is the end of the commandment—which is that for which God put the commandment into this life.

What, now, is *charity?* It is that sublime likeness to God which carries with it purity of heart, conscience, and faith. It is the generic term for the truths which lie outside of this life—for supersensuous truths—for truths that are invisible—for truths which belong to places and realms that are beyond the reach of the body, or of scientific truths; for science limits itself to that which the body can take hold of. And this is that which the apostle says the commandment was put into the world for. And his business was so to preach and to hold up that commandment as to produce this kind of love, or charity.

From this consideration of the nature of true divine love, or charity, light may be thrown upon the administration of justice and benevolence in the divine government.

It has been the habit of men, on the one side, to feel, and sometimes to teach, that justice has a field all to itself, and that mercy has a field all to itself; as if they were two very different things, not only, but as if when one acted the other did not. In other words, as in human experience men are angry, thoroughly angry, so that they feel nothing else but anger, and then, when that has passed away they are thoroughly good-natured so as not to be at all angry, —their minds being like a handle with two blades, one of which being open the other must be shut, or one of which being shut the other must be open; so men have transferred this purely human affection, according to its weakness, to the divine administration; and there has been an impression that God was a God of benevolence, to be sure, but that he was also a God of justice. It has been supposed that sometimes he is a God of justice, and sometimes a God of love; and that when he is the one, he can not be the other. And when he is a God of justice it behooves sinners to look out for his sword, that goes flashing through the universe—that and nothing else; but when he has vindicated his will, then his sword is put up, and then comes the scepter of mercy—that, and nothing else. As if mercy ever could exist, and be a divine quality, unless it had justice in it all the time! As if any justice could exist that had not mercy in it to the very grain and core! As if you could separate the two! As if, because we, in our whole animal conditions, do separate them, and because we are unable to rise to the highest forms of moral development, we were to carry the analogue up, and separate love and mercy in the divine administration, and make God as poor and meagre as men are! But such has been the habit.

This has tended to raise up reacting views. There have come up on the two sides of this disposition, two general schools of theology, one of which revolves around the conception of God as a benevolent governor. And his benevolence, to their thought, is largely a benevolence of moral indifference, or of fatalism—or fatal good nature. They usually are a rebound from the other school—from those men who have constitutionally a large conscience, and large reflective faculties.

These latter form to themselves an idea of government among men. They believe that law is indispensable to good government, to national life, and to individual happiness. And by their constitution they are on the side of justice, as the administration of law. "Put down," they say, "put down whatever will disturb so-

ciety. If it will get out of the way, let it; but if it will not, put it down. And as much pain as is necessary to do it, must be inflicted." They transfer that which is human to the divine nature, and say, "In the infinite realm God is just, and he must govern by truth, and law and justice; and all that will be true and just and upright shall be happy; and all that will not must take the consequences, and be overwhelmed—or, if they are not, it will be because there is some special interposition of divine mercy. They hold up the mechanical character of a God governing, first, by justice. "For," say they, "he must be true." "First pure," they say, "and then peaceable." But has not a man a right to be peaceable until he is pure? Do you suppose it is the absolute, philosophical, arithmetical order, that a man shall be first pure and then peaceable? Must we quarrel until we are pure? And yet, this question is discussed, and arguments are plied to show that God must be just before there is room for anything besides justice. It is said, not only that he must be just, but that in order to save by his Son he must exact justice before he can grant happiness. Mercy, according to their view, must stand back, as if it were something separable from justice, and different from it. They believe that in the government of God, first is justice, with all its infinite modes of administration; with all its infinite penalties; with all its infinite outlying consequences. Their idea of God is that of a Being who stands in a justice that is something other and different from the spirit of love. And this idea has been lifted up before men. And I do not hesitate to say that where the most "Gospel" has been preached (strange inconsistency!), there the predominant idea, to this day, of Christians is, that God is a Being to be feared, that he is a "consuming fire," as he is represented to be in the Old Testament. That has been the one thought which has cast a lurid light over communities. Religion has been made unattractive, and sometimes even repulsive, because men have held that God was a God of justice, and of a justice which was separate and different from love. As if there could be any justice but that which love inspires and directs! And yet that idea has crept into men's beliefs, and the result has been that there have risen up two systems of theology, in one of which the predominant idea had been, *justice administered by divine power.* And this idea has gone on augmenting and intensifying, until the hell made by justice has been a caldron only smaller than the heaven into which myriad ages have been pouring contributions. And God, because he was just, has all this time been sitting in the topmost heaven, carrying on this gigantic slaughter of creation! He has gone on creating the eight hundred million creatures of the globe, and pouring them endlessly down,

untaught, unhelped, without good neighborhood, without Christ, without the Bible, without revelation from any source, under the pressure of the circumstances around about them, swept by a resistless fate to their pitiful end, all because God could not spare, or did not spare, or would not spare! That has been preached and held up before men.

I do not wonder, therefore, that there has been a terrific rebound; and that there has risen up on the other side a school of men that said, "Away with such a bloody tyranny! Away with such a notion of God! God is good—too good to make suffering." And yet, the wail of poverty in the street; the winter wind that brings dismay to thousands and thousands of our fellow creatures; the myriad forms of distress which exist throughout the world—these all teach us that there is a God that will allow suffering.

The whole creation has "groaned and travailed in pain until now." And can it be said that there is no purpose in it, no motive for it? Can it be said that there is to be no disciplinary suffering in this world, and in the world to come? And yet there have been men who have made God out to be a Being so good and kind that he cannot bear to cause a sigh or see a tear, that he cannot bear to produce suffering; who have made him out to be a pellucid, smiling, easy-going, good-natured God, that excused everybody; that said, "You had better not do so and so," but still, if they will, lets them, and does not punish them for it; whose indulgence is like that of a foolish parent, who, seeing a child going headlong to destruction, is too kind to subject the child to that discipline which is necessary to arrest it in its downward course.

And so there has sprung up that swollen, obese and miserable conception of a Governor in heaven, who, in his administration, made no difference between right and wrong; no difference between sin and righteousness; no difference between guilt and merit; no difference between obedience and disobedience to law.

If there is anything taught by nature and providence, it is that God is a God of justice as well as of love; that when love rules in heaven, and puts its soft arms around men and lays its soft hands on men, there are bones in those arms and in those hands; that *love* means truth; that *love* means justice; that *love* means government; that love tends to produce the one and the other, all the way through; and that there is no difference between them. Love working by enforcements is justice, and justice working by kindness is love. They are not to be separated. That love which includes justice, is the one identic development of the divine disposition by which, not the means, but the ends are to be looked at.

What is God administering for? What is the purpose of the problem of life but to develop men, and bring out their powers, and carry them forward to a better state of existence? And in working out this problem, God punishes those that are disobedient. He stimulates those who are prone to self-indulgence or discouragement. Tears are lessons. Groans are modes of instruction. Sufferings are ways of discipline. But they are sufferings inflicted, not for the sake of giving pain; not for the sake of avenging any wrong committed; but for the sake of refashioning, reforming. And the love-work of God throughout the universe is the production of love. In other words, "The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

This whole error springs from the habit of regarding divine attributes purely in the light of human infirmities. It is true that man must reason from his own self to the divine. This is a difficult process of reasoning. It is one that is beset with liabilities to error. Nevertheless, it is the only ladder by which we can ascend from our own moral consciousness to the divine consciousness. You have just as much knowledge of God as you have in yourselves the moral susceptibility to interpret from. If you have no feeling of conscience, you have no means of understanding what conscience is in God. If you have no love, if you have no patience, if you have no long-suffering, then you have no elements by which you can gain a true conception of the divine nature. And so we must fashion our own idea of God from some moral consciousness in ourselves.

But scrupulous care is required that we shall not select our lower nature, and transfer the conception which comes from that to the divine nature. Nor should we take the imperfections of our higher moral nature—those strains of experience which we have by reason of our limitation and our lowness—and raise them up as the ideals and models after which to fashion our conceptions and ideals in reference to God. We are to seize the luminous hours in our experience which reveal the higher manhood of the soul; and from these we are to get an ideal from which we can reason toward God. And even then we shall see Him as through a glass darkly. Our best conceptions, our truest ideals, our highest moods—even these interpret but very imperfectly the divine nature to us. And yet, it is this, if anything, that must interpret him to us.

Now, in interpreting God from ourselves, why should we disjoin these moral emotions, as if there were not in us the hints and beginnings of that which is in God in its perfect form? As men are uncultivated, their faculties work separately and individually. As men are cultivated, their faculties more and more work together.

What we mean by *civilization* and *education* is not simply the development of force in each faculty, but subordination in groups of faculties, and, above all, selection and harmonization between faculties, so that the mind comes out of many different tendencies to a certain sort of moral unity. By *education* and *civilization* we mean especially this: the so using of any faculty, or any set of faculties, that all the rest shall be in harmony with it. Men, when they are yet uncultivated, separate feeling and intellect. Intellect goes one way, and feeling another. As men grow truly cultivated, the feelings carry with them intellect, and the intellect carries with it feeling; and they are not separated. That is a spurious refinement which makes men so fastidious that they must have a power that will not let feeling come up and mix with it. All true culture and development carries feeling in reason, and reason in feeling; for true culture tends toward harmonization and unity. When men are low, there is no such thing as taste, there is nothing but sense, to them. They want fact. They want exactitude. They want literality. They want bestiality, almost. But as men carry up their developments, not simply in the realm or sense, or that which is accurate, or that which is effectual, but in the realm of imagination, of taste, of the higher emotions, these two realms do not interfere with each other, but harmonize. They come together easily in a high state of development.

In the lower forms of life, personal liberty leaves men unbound. They throw off law and throw off all restraint. But in the higher forms of development, men find that the way to be perfectly free, is to be perfectly faithful to duty. That is, obligation, obedience to the highest conception of duty, carries the highest personal liberty to men. Duty and unity belong to the higher conditions of life.

I have already illustrated that love in its lower forms, tends to act toward justice or anger, at one time, and toward mercy at another time; but as men grow wiser and come into better relations, we see how it is that love carries a perpetual justice, and justice a perpetual love. We see then the noblest representation of the unity of these feelings and their inseparableness, not alone in the household, not alone in the parental relation, but in the relations of friendship.

There is nothing that you are more sensitive to than the excellence of those whom you love most. You cannot bear that those whom you love should not be pure and true. You can tolerate imperfection in any others better than in those whom you love. You want them to represent your highest ideal.

Take the familiar instance of a mother. I think that a great-minded woman, who is all but a Christian by nature, and who is then

enriched by grace, and brought into the conscious sympathy and affinity of the Lord Jesus Christ—I think that such a woman, administering in the household, presents the best conception of moral government, and the best conception of mediatorial work, and the best conception of atoning love, which it is possible to present on earth. Men have gone to kings to get it: I go to my queen. Men go to states: I go to my household. Men go to generic sources: I go to specific. You shall nowhere find a pattern so near to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the grounds and reasons of moral government in the atoning grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, as in a great, rich, ripe, sweet-minded woman, who is bringing up her household of perhaps six, seven, eight, nine children. And the illustration is all the more striking where, as is sometimes the case, a woman does this with poverty in her own family, and yet is sweet-minded, and is always working, though never for herself, and is never weary, and is willing to be interrupted by this, that, or the other one, and is always living for others, in others, under others, spending or being spent to lift up those that are weaker than she—those that first drew nutriment from her breast, and who all the rest of their days have been drawing life from her heart of love, she continually pouring out the spirit of love for them.

And yet does she not bring tears from them? Is there anybody else so rigorous against meanness as she? Oh! how she hates it in her children! But does she gnash her teeth at them, because she hates it? Does she smite them? Yes, sometimes; and she ought to; for she cannot always get along without it. If the infliction of physical pain can be avoided, it is better to avoid it; but there are times when it must be resorted to. It is a matter of temperament and constitution, whether you shall bring in physical as well as moral, or other motives. But this is the thought: that in the administration of love in the family, pain and pleasure are instruments, alternatives. And for the sake of what? for the sake of making suffering? for the sake of satisfying a broken law of the household? for the sake of vindicating the dignity and personality of the mother? No. The end of her administration is to work those children up to a disposition "of love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned"; and she administers to that end, mingling all the time with her administration, truth, purity, duty, and integrity. And her sternest moments of integrity are wrapped about with the atmosphere of love and goodness. And you cannot take the two elements apart. There she stands in the household, and is God to those children till they have grown up; and her example there is one of beneficence, and furnishes the best

conception that we can have upon earth of a government which consists of self-sacrifice; of living for others; of pouring out one's life for others, and of administering so as to bring them up from their low estate to a life of excellence. And in her treatment of them, punishing or rewarding them according to the dictates of her best judgment as to what will promote their highest welfare, you get a better ideal of the government of God than in the whole realm of human life besides. No king, no schedule of kingly government, ever came half so near to representing the divine government as this mother's administration in the household.

Now, is it necessary, even in reasoning of the divine nature from our experience, that we should separate love and justice, and make two Gods—one a God of mercy, and another a God of justice? or that we should make God a God of love at one time, and a God of justice at another? that we should make him now a God of sternness, and then a God of mercy? Not at all. God is always just, or he is never just; he is always merciful, or he is never merciful. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He always mingles love and justice together; and both of them are instruments for building men up from the lowest forms to a glorious perfected state of manhood in the future.

All such representations, then, of the divine moral government, as naturally and necessarily leave the impression that because God is good he is careless of moral distinctions; all such representations as leave the impression that God is *good-natured*, rather than *good;* that he will not permit suffering; that he will not punish the wrong-doer; that he leaves nature, a vast machine, to turn out results without praise or blameworthiness—all such representations proceed upon a theory of benevolence which is neither Scriptural, experimental, rational nor philosophical. The general effect of such views, if left alone, is to lower the tone of conscience, to diminish the inspiration of spiritual life, and to deteriorate, ultimately, the morals of the community.

On the other hand, any representations of divine justice in the moral government of God which leave it before men as doing or permitting things which fairly shock an intelligent benevolence, does so upon a false philosophy both of government and of the attributes of justice.

The quality of justice is indispensable to the highest form of love. Love thinks, reasons, discriminates, prefers, chooses, condemns, punishes, and yet is never cruel, but is always love. Love *is* just. It is the nature of love to be just, to be true. It does not take two natures to make the two things. It is the office of love, when it shall

have risen up out of its lower condition, and out of its training-ground, to bring forth fruit of justice as well as of love. That is the way it acts, and pursues its end.

It is perfectly fair, then, judging of the truth by various representations of the divine government and of the divine nature, to say that any view which shocks that feeling educated under Christian teaching, in Christian families, and by legitimate Christian truth, is false. In other words, that moral susceptibility, that moral sense of rectitude, and that moral sense of obligation which are the legitimate fruits of Christianity in us, become a tribunal before which we have a right to judge, not God, but men's representations of God; not everlasting truth, but the systems of truth which men propose for our adjudication and for our acceptance. And the moral sense of Christendom is obliged to review, in every few centuries, the systems of theology which exist, and to take out the naturalism and heathenism which there is in them, and substitute for them the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

There is but one other point that I shall make. As yet, I think no man can frame a system for the actual history and the actual events of the world which unites both sides—divine justice and divine love. They are separable among men, but united in God. We have never risen high enough to lay an explanatory conception on the course of history. I do not despair of its being done in this world, but I do not expect that it will be done in my day. The mystery of history is an insoluble problem. Take the highest idea of moral government over the world, and attempt to apply it to the events that have chequered the flow of human life in this world, and you are met at every step by questions unanswerable. In Job you will find precisely the same reasonings that are advanced to-day; you will find there the same line of argument which may be found in Byron's works, in Goethe's Faust, and in the philosophy of each succeeding intelligent age. You find as magnificently set forth in Job as in any subsequent literature of the world, the question of how to reconcile the facts in life with the conception of the nature of a divine Governor who discriminates between right and wrong. That is a question that is not solved; and we have not risen high enough, as yet, to solve it. Ages may do it; but we are not in a state to do it now.

And, as we cannot go backward, and lay an explanatory philosophy on all the events of history, still less are we able to go forward with it. That is to say, it is impossible for a man to lay down a schedule of what God must do and will do in the future. I am shocked to see how little I know, sometimes; and oftener to see how much

other people know. I hear people discussing theology and showing a familiarity with the divine nature and the divine government which is perfectly wonderful. I hear men say that God cannot do this, and that He can do that, as though they had been in His counsels, and found out everything that He knows. "Who by searching can find out God?" why, a theologian—a theological professor! Everything in the alphabet not only, but everything that the alphabet can be made to spell out, he knows. Men make their wicker-work systems of theology the basis of a familiarity with divine thought and divine action and divine being, which is truly astounding. One would think that a man's soul would feel itself abashed, as the revelator did, before angels, and much more before God, whose immensity of experience so far transcends our highest moods of experience; and yet, men look up and say, "God goes just so far in that direction, and just so far in that; he is just so long, and just so broad." They have the doctrine of the divine nature and the divine government all studied out. They can tell you exactly how it opens and shuts. It is like a Chinese puzzle; and if you do not know how you cannot, and if you do know you can, put in every piece just right. If you believe just so, you are "orthodox," but if you do not, you are a "heretic." If you believe so and so, you are a "Pelagian;" or, if you are not that, you are a "*semi*-Pelagian." And what an awful thing it is to be a "Pelagian" or a "semi-Pelagian" all one's life, and not know it! "You are no better than an Arminian," says the Professor. You do not know what that is; but whatever it is, you wish you were not that. And you are afraid of being an "Arian," a "Socinian," a "Pelagian," and pretty much everything else. We have ever so many mad-dog names on points that are mystical, or on points which human knowledge is inadequate to grasp. These blind theories of government are the ones on which there has been more persecution than on any others; and they are today the test questions, the shibboleths, that separate between church and church. Is there on earth a body of men that God has more blessed than He has the Methodist church and ministry? And why do they stand separated from the great Presbyterian body? The "Five Points of Calvinism," "Foreordination," the "Decrees," the "Decree of Reprobation" and the "Decree of Election," an "Efficacious Calling," so that a man shall not fall from grace, and a score of other doctrines (I have forgotten them; my education is incomplete in this regard)—what are they but so many metaphysical views of the divine government, and the divine character, which separate these two great bodies of Christians? And so the Arminian stands firing at the Calvinist, and the Calvinist stands firing back at the Armin-

ian. They are at agreement in respect to the great essentials of religion, and yet these non-essentials are a wall of separation between them—though, thank God, the wall is getting lower and lower, and the spirit of love is growing stronger and stronger.

Only see how those that are alike in theologies, and in church polities and sympathies—the great Baptist brotherhood and the Pedo-Baptists—are separated by their difference of belief on one or two minor points of doctrine? One says, "You may baptize children." The other says, "You may not." One says, "You must put them all under." The other says, "It is only necessary to sprinkle them." That is all that separates them. There is not a turnpike so hard, there is not a way so broad, that these brethren can travel on it together with this little bit of difference between them. They hold the same general doctrines, and employ the same symbols; but this slight variation in the mode of administering a rite keeps them apart.

And so it is all the way through Christendom. You shall find churches split up, here on doctrine, there on polity; here on organization, there on robes; here on days. There are the "Seventh-day Baptists," and there are the "Sixth-day Baptists"—no, not Sixth-day Baptists—yes; at any rate there are those that say you must keep Saturday, and there are others that say you must keep Sunday. And if I laugh at them, and say "What difference does it make," they say, "None, so far as the day is concerned; But is not *obedience* something? That is the question." "Eh!" says the Seventh-day Baptists, "Did not God command us to observe the seventh day? and is *disobedience* nothing?" And so they entrench themselves behind this technicality of obedience or disobedience.

If I go to those who believe in immersion, and say, "Do you really think that it makes any difference, when one is baptized, whether he goes under the water, or is sprinkled?" they say "It makes no difference so far as the mere effect on the individual is concerned; but if Christ said, 'Go under the water,' the *obedience* or *disobedience* makes a great deal of difference." Well, I cannot get away from that. They have got me there.

If I go to an Episcopalian, and say, "Now, do you think it makes any difference about my salvation whether I am in the 'true church' or not? Do you not suppose that I can get to Heaven out of my own church as well as out of yours?" he says, "Well, the mere church is nothing, but if Christ said that this was the true church, the *obedience* is something."

And so they all have their little catch-word *obedience*, as if that were the marrow of Christianity; as if God thought of these little

screws, and nail-heads, and tacks! They may have some value in the machinery; but they are only parts, and minor parts of it. "The end of the commandment," says the apostle, the whole thing which the commandment aims at and is designed to produce, "is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

Now go home and quarrel over your *doxies*. Go home and quarrel over your churches. But remember that he who loves God, and is accepted of him, he whose love is outpouring an intelligent beneficence from a pure heart, from a sound conscience, and from a true, unfeigned faith in the future, is the sweet product, the golden fruit of the tree of life. And pray, whatever may become of baptisms, and days, and ordinances, and rituals, which are permissible, but not authoritative—pray that the end which the commandment seeks may be wrought out in you.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Our Father, teach us to pray. As thy disciples gathered about thee, blessed Saviour, and asked knowledge of the way of thought and faith and love, so do we. We do not need to ask thee for daily bread, as though we were hungry; for our wants are abundantly supplied. It is rather for us to give thanks than to solicit. Nor do we come to thee to ask thy help by which we shall be able to live in all this outward estate. Already thou hast so inspired us, and hast surrounded us by so many influences, that we are guided and taught and sustained. But how shall we come to thee as children come? How shall we understand thee when only out of ourselves can we find and fashion those elements of thought by which to discern thee? Oh! how poor are we in goodness! and how is love itself but a struggling taper in us! Often plunged in selfishness; often worldly and calculating; seldom shining far above the horizon, and beyond the reach of mist and vapor: poor as the stars, how shall we understand thy nature of love and infinite beneficence that wearies not; that never forsakes truth; that never forsakes justice; that never forsakes goodness; that bears in itself eternal truth and justice and goodness, and yet forever loves, beneficent on every side, in act, in thought, in plan, in administration, in attribute, and in fruit and outcome; that in all things is full of the desire to create happiness in men, and to continue them in enjoyment? How shall we form anything in ourselves that shall raise us to the conception of the goodness of thy nature? What do we know of long-suffering, who are tired in a day? If thou that sittest on the circle of the earth art not tired; if thou that art ever on the battle-field of life art unwearied; if thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, what is there in us that can interpret thee? Who, by searching, can find out God? And if we draw near to thee to pray; if we would commune with thee, exchanging our thoughts for thine, speaking with thee as children may speak with a parent, then we need to say to thee, Lord, teach us how to pray. Teach us better things in life. Teach us nobler feelings. Teach us those aspirations that shall break upward toward thee. Teach us that renunciation that shall cure pride, and selfishness, and envy, and jealousy, and every hateful and malign passion. Teach us to live above the power of the senses, and in the realm and under the dominion of faith, more and more, from day to day, so that every day we may be better fitted for communion with thee.

And now, Lord, we desire to thank thee, this morning, for the help of days past. For our sky is not altogether clouded. Bright is it in places, though there are storms in the heavens which our passions bring. We discern thee afar off, though we see but thy retreating glory. Thy face we cannot see while we are in the flesh. We rejoice in our past experience, and in the hope which it begets in us for the future. And we desire to give ourselves to the ministration of thy good Spirit, opening our hearts wide, and not grieving thee by our coldness or want of the disposition to welcome thee. Enter, O Spirit of light and comfort and purity! and cleanse our hearts. Illumine them, and fill them with the divine life. And we pray that we may walk with a holy hope and faith of that life which is not far beyond us, and to which we aspire. We shall not carry thither all our joys. Many of them are earthly joys which dry up upon the stalk, and which the wind rattles; and these shall be left behind. We shall not always be seeking those things which perish in the using. We shall not say to the eye, Thou art my God; nor to the ear, Thou art my king. We shall yet live and be as the sons of God, and dwell in an immortality of nobler pleasures, and brighter joys,

and purer aspirations, forever fulfilling themselves. We shall be as the children of the living God.

Grant that that life beyond may never quite fade out, and that there may come more frequent hours when it shall shine out like the very gate of heaven. Speak to us, O thou blessed God! by thy inaudible voice, that the soul only knows. Grant us the witness of the Spirit that we are sons of God. And if we do not know what that means, may it rise up in us as music heard afar off, whose tones cannot be distinguished. And may it center in us. And so may we hear the sounds and feel the influences from the heavenly land. And may we long, if it be the will of God, to lay down our burden, and our duty, and our life, that we may find our nobler life and our better joys with thee.

Accept the thanks of all those who come up this morning to thank thee that thou hast heard their prayers; of those that thank thee for strength given them to accomplish the purposes about which they were sent in thy providence; of those that thank thee for great escapes from circumstances of fear; of those that thank thee for restored health; of those that thank thee that in the midst of deep bereavements and afflictions and distress, thou hast held their head up above the wave. Accept the thanksgiving of those that would thank thee if they dared, but that think they must not. Break through all such fears, and show thyself not only to those that are near, but to those that are afar off all the more. Be with those who think themselves to be thy children, and give thanks to-day. And those that are wandering from the fold, away from their Father's house. Grant that they may have a better mood to-day, and lift them up to a plane where they shall have some thoughts of thanksgiving to their God.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless all that are in trouble. And if they have come up here to have their troubles lightened, give them not release unless it be best for them; but say to them (and may they feel thine arm about them), "My grace shall be sufficient for thee." And we pray that there may be this release, that we shall be able to bear trouble by the grace of God, and to become stronger by it, and clearer in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, by darkness and by light.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt be near to those that cannot come unto us, nor mingle their voices here; who are shut up, it may be, by sickness. Be gracious to them, and send thine angels to minister sweet thoughts to them of that rest which remaineth for the people of God. May there open up before them light from the other world, and may all their gloom and sadness be cheered away by the communications of thy dear Spirit.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt be near to those that watch with the sick; to those that carry great burdens; to those who, in beholding the play of life, recall their own lives, and all the multitude of the mercies of it. Shed the influence of thy Spirit upon them, we beseech of thee.

And we pray for those who are disconsolate, and who sit in darkness of mind. May a great light arise upon them. Go to them, thou comforting Saviour.

And if there be those who mourn over their sins to-day; if there be those who are heart-broken in view of their own wickedness; if there be those whose consciences bear witness against them, and all of whose better nature stands up and accuses them, stand thou, dear Saviour, on their side. Justify them, speak peace to them, though they be sinful. And grant that they may hear thy voice saying to them, Love and justice are united. Thy sins are forgiven thee. Rise, go, and sin no more.

We beseech of thee, O Lord our God! that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all according to their own circumstances—in the unmentionable

circumstances of their life; in their hidden thoughts, or hidden joys, or hidden griefs; in those troubles that they cannot themselves understand, or that, if they could understand them, they could not mention.

Be with those that are far from us to-day on errands of thy providence, wherever they are. May thy Spirit go with them. May they find a home may they enjoy the Sabbath, and may they find a sanctuary of worship, though it be in the wilderness.

Be with those who have gone down upon the great deep. Especially be with thy servant, our brother, who for so many years has ministered near unto us, and here frequently. Be with him and with his, and keep him yet in the hollow of thy hand. And during the months of his separation from his people, and in distant lands, Lord, bless him, in body and in soul. And spare him to come back again, and to shine brighter, and be stronger and more fruitful in the work of the Master than ever he has been before. And keep the people of his charge, and all their households. May death spare them, and light abound with them. And may the sanctuary still be strong, and thy servants labor together for the things that are lacking now in their midst.

And so we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless all the churches near unto us. May we think more and more of them, and not altogether of ourselves. May we seek to take hold of hands with all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. And carry forward thy great work in this city and throughout all our cities, and throughout this whole land.

We pray for schools and colleges and seminaries of training.

We pray for all that are in authority in this nation. We pray that thou wilt give us magistrates that shall fear God. May our laws become purer; and may the administration of them become more and more righteous. We beseech of thee that thou wilt remember all governors and counsellors in this Union. Be pleased to remember the President of these United States, and his cabinet in counsel with him. Give them wisdom, and give them the Spirit of the living God, that they may do their duty as in the fear of the Lord.

Bless all that are in authority throughout the world. May they rule diligently, and in mercy, and without selfishness, and without oppression.

We beseech of thee that wars may speedily come to an end. May men learn a better way. May they learn to lift up the light of knowledge upon the whole earth. May darkness and superstition flee away, and the bright day of knowledge and of piety come, and all the earth see thy salvation.

Which mercies we ask in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Heavenly Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt set thy seal to the truth spoken. Grant that we may rise up into the higher, the diviner love. May we not give up things that are right, and things that are just. May we know the natural language of true love. May we know that we cannot experience that love if we are heedless and conscienceless and faithless. And grant, we pray thee, that we may more and more experience the sympathy of divine patience and benevolence, and bring forth richly such fruits that men, seeing our good works, shall glorify our Father which is in heaven. And help us to sing once more. Go home with us, and make our homes sweet and redolent as heaven. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen*

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